

www.medicare.gov

The Official U.S. Government Site for Medicare Information Established by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)

HCFA's website has useful information for Medicare beneficiaries and those involved in helping them make health care decisions. The main topics are:

★ *Search and Compare Tools*

Search for information on health plans, nursing homes, Medigap policies, phone contacts, and Medicare activities in your area.

★ *Publications*

View, print, or order Medicare or health related publications.

★ *Medicare Plan Choices*

Learn about Original Medicare, managed care, Private Fee-For-Service, and Medigap policies. You can also compare health plans available in your area.

★ *Fraud and Abuse*

How to recognize and prevent fraud and abuse.

★ *Nursing Homes*

How to choose a nursing home (alternatives, payment, checklist, patient rights). You can also compare nursing homes in your area.

★ *Health Information*

Contains important information and links to health websites to help you stay healthy.

★ *Helpful Contacts*

Phone numbers and web sites for help in answering your questions.

★ *Medicare Basics*

Information on coverage, eligibility, enrollment, and help with health care costs.



Search and Compare Tools to Find the Information You Need:

Medicare Health Plan Compare

Comparison shop for health plans by looking at costs, benefits, quality, and plan member disenrollment rates. Health plans include: Original Medicare Plan, Medicare managed care plans (HMOs), and Private Fee-for-Service plans.

Medigap Compare

Helps you find supplemental insurance policies available in your area to cover expenses not paid by Medicare.

Nursing Home Compare

Helps you compare nursing homes in your area by looking at nursing home characteristics, resident characteristics, state inspection results, and nursing staff information.

Helpful Contacts

Allows you to find phone numbers and web sites for help in answering your questions.

Local Medicare Events

Gives you details about events on Medicare-related topics in your area, and information about how you can attend.

Seniors are Surfing the Net

Some interesting facts:

More and more, people with Medicare and those who will soon be eligible for Medicare use the Internet. The following research shows that Internet use is growing among people age 50 and older:

Internet access among people with Medicare has increased dramatically from 1997 to 1999. Findings from the HCFA-sponsored Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey indicate that the percentage of Medicare beneficiaries reporting access to the Internet climbed from 6.8% in 1997 to 21.3% in 1999.

According to Jupiter Communications, older adults (50+) spend more hours online each week than any other age group. Older adults spend an average of 8.3 hours online each week, with college students spending 7.8 hours, adults aged 19-50 spending 7.7 hours and teens 13-18 spending 5.9 hours online.

Senior citizens are the fastest growing sector of the online audience, exploding from a meager 600,000 in 1995 to an estimated 13 million in 1998 according to SeniorNet. An eMarketer recently released eRetail Report supports this trend: in 1999, almost 10 million seniors, or 17% of all Americans aged 55+, were active internet users.

Eighty-three percent of surveyed senior surfers like the ability to get news or investigate a topic online. Of those, 49% went online to find medical information, according to Interactive PR and Marketing News (Sept. 1999).